IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing nonwarped semiconductor die from a wafer having a front side, a back side, and a front side layer on a portion of said wafer causing a stress, said method comprising:
reducing a cross-section of said semiconductor die by thinning said semiconductor die;
applying a stress-balancing layer to said wafer; and
singulating said wafer into a plurality of semiconductor die.

2. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said front side layer comprises a layer applied in fabrication of said semiconductor die.

3. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said front side layer comprises a layer of passivation material.

4. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said thinning comprises grinding.

5. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said thinning comprises a chemical-mechanical method.

6. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said semiconductor die comprises an integrated circuit semiconductor die.

7. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer substantially covering said back side.

8. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a strip covering a selected portion of a row of semiconductor dice on said wafer.

9. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a plurality of portions, each said portion covering a selected portion of said thinned semiconductor die on said wafer.

10. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 9, wherein said selected portion comprises a majority of said thinned semiconductor die.

11. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a film.

12. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned semiconductor die by one of a chemical vapor deposition (CVD) process, an evaporation process, and an epitaxy process.

13. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned semiconductor die by one of LPCVD, APCVD, MOCVD, PECVD, and UHVCVD.

14. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned semiconductor die by one of VPE, MBE, and CMOSE.

15. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a single homogeneous component.

16. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises one of a metal, alloy, metalorganic material, photoresist material, and an organic polymer.

17. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a heterogeneous composite structure comprising reinforcing particles in a solid matrix material.

18. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise inorganic particles.

19. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise one of a metal, an alloy, glass, and a combination thereof.

20. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particles for providing reinforcement in the X-Y plane of said stress-balancing layer.

21. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particles for providing reinforcement in the X, Y, and Z directions.

22. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 17, wherein said matrix material comprises one of silicon dioxide, silicon nitride, and an organic polymeric material.

23. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said semiconductor die comprises one of a DIP, SIP, ZIP, PLCC, SOJ, SIMM, DIMM, LOC, QFP, SOP, TSOP, and a flip-chip.

24. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a material markable with indicia.

25. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 22, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a material markable by optical radiation energy.

26. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 22, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene tape.

27. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 25, further comprising exposing a portion of said material markable with optical energy exposing at least a portion of said material markable to one of a Nd:YAG (yttrium aluminum garnet), Nd:YLP (pulsed yttrium fiber laser) or carbon dioxide laser.

28. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

applying a tape over said stress-balancing layer, said tape comprising a UV-penetrable polyvinyl chloride tape having an acrylic UV-sensitive adhesive disposed thereon; and

exposing a portion of said tape with optical energy exposing at least a portion of said tape to one of a Nd:YAG, Nd-YLP or carbon dioxide laser.

29. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a first sublayer having high rigidity in the X-direction and a second sub-layer having high rigidity in the Y-direction.

30. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer having a coefficient of thermal expansion substantially similar to a coefficient of thermal expansion of said front side layer.

31. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising applying a die-attach adhesive to at least a portion of a surface of said stress-balancing layer.

32. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising applying a temporary reinforcement layer over at least a portion of said front side layer prior to thinning said back side.

33. (Previously Presented) A method for producing a small Z-dimension nonwarped semiconductor die from a semiconductor wafer having a front side, a back side, and a stress applied thereto by a front side layer, said method comprising:
reducing a cross-section of said semiconductor die by thinning said back side thereof;
applying a rigid stress-balancing layer to a portion of said thinned back side; and
singulating said wafer into a plurality of nonwarped semiconductor dice.

34. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said front side layer comprises a layer applied in a microcircuit fabrication step.

35. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said front side layer comprises a layer of passivation material.

36. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said thinning comprises grinding by a grinding apparatus.

37. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said thinning comprises a chemical-physical method.

38. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said semiconductor die comprises an integrated circuit semiconductor die.

39. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer substantially covering said thinned back side.

40. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a strip covering a selected portion of a row of semiconductor dice on said wafer.

41. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a plurality of discrete portions, each said portion covering a selected portion of the thinned back side of a die on said wafer.

42. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 41, wherein said selected portion comprises a majority of said thinned die back side.

43. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a film.

44. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned back side by one of a chemical vapor deposition (CVD) process, an evaporation process, and an epitaxy process.

45. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned back side by one of LPCVD, APCVD, MOCVD, PECVD, and UHVCVD.

46. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said thinned back side by one of VPE, MBE, and CMOSE.

47. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a single homogeneous component.

48. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises one of a metal, alloy, metalorganic material, photoresist material, and an organic polymer.

49. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a heterogeneous composite structure comprising reinforcing particles in a solid matrix material.

50. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 49, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particles of inorganic material.

51. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 49, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise one of a metal, an alloy, and glass.

52. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 49, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particles for providing reinforcement in the X-Y plane of said stress-balancing layer.

53. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 49, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particle for providing reinforcement in the X, Y, and Z directions.

54. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 49, wherein said matrix material comprises one of silicon dioxide, silicon nitride, and an organic polymeric material.

55. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said die comprises one of a DIP, SIP, ZIP, PLCC, SOJ, SIMM, DIMM, LOC, QFP, SOP, TSOP, and a flip-chip.

56. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a material markable with indicia.

57. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 56, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a material markable by optical radiation energy.

58. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 56, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a polytetrafluoroethylene tape.

59. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 56, further comprising exposing a portion of said material markable with optical energy exposing at least a portion of said material markable to one of a Nd:YAG (yttrium aluminum garnet), Nd:YLP (pulsed yttrium fiber laser) or carbon dioxide laser.

60. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, further comprising applying a tape over said stress-balancing layer, said tape comprising a UV-penetrable polyvinyl chloride tape having an acrylic UV-sensitive adhesive disposed thereon, and exposing a portion of said tape with optical energy exposing at least a portion of said tape to one of a Nd:YAG, Nd-YLP, or carbon dioxide laser.

61. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a first sublayer having high rigidity in the X-direction, and a second sublayer having high rigidity in the Y-direction.

62. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer having a coefficient of thermal expansion substantially similar to that of said front side layer.

63. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, further comprising applying a die-attach adhesive to at least a portion of an outer surface of said stress-balancing layer.

64. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 33, further comprising applying a temporary reinforcement layer over said front side layer prior to thinning said back side.

65. (Previously Presented) A method for producing low Z-dimension nonwarped semiconductor dice having a die front side, a die back side, and a stress applied thereto by a die front side layer, said method comprising:

forming a semiconductor wafer having a front side, a back side, a plurality of microcircuits on said front side, and a front side layer applying stress to said wafer;

reducing a cross-section of said semiconductor wafer by thinning said back side thereof;

singulating said wafer into a plurality of semiconductor dice; and

applying a rigid stress-balancing layer to said thinned back side under conditions which apply a back side stress generally equivalent to said front side stress upon restoration to conditions of said semiconductor die use.

66. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said front side layer comprises a layer of passivation material.

67. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said back side by one of a chemical vapor deposition (CVD)

process, an evaporation process, and an epitaxy process.

68. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said back side by one of LPCVD, APCVD, MOCVD, PECVD, and UHVCVD.

69. (Previously Presented) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer applied to said back side by one of VPE, MBE, and CMOSE.

70. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a single homogeneous component.

71. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 70, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises one of a metal, alloy, metalorganic material, photoresist material, and an organic polymer.

72. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 65, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a heterogeneous composite structure comprising reinforcing particles in a solid matrix material.

73. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 72, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise particles of inorganic material.

74. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 72, wherein said reinforcing particles comprise one of a metal, an alloy, and glass.

75. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor die, comprising:
a semiconductor substrate having a front side and a back side;
an integrated circuit on a portion of said front side;
a passivation layer covering a portion of said integrated circuit; and
a stress-balancing layer covering at least a portion of said back side.

76. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor die in accordance with claim 75, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises one of a single component layer, a substantially homogeneous mixture

of a strong material in a matrix material, a heterogeneous composite of particles of a strong material in a matrix material, and a tape with rigidity in the X-Y plane.

77. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor die in accordance with claim 75, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises an adhesive material.

78. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor die in accordance with claim 75, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer for laser-marking.

79. (Withdrawn) A semiconductor die in accordance with claim 75, further comprising an adhesive layer attached to said stress-balancing layer.

80. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 79, wherein said adhesive layer comprises a layer of material for laser-marking.

81. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die, comprising:

a semiconductor substrate having a front side, a back side, and a low ratio of height to a horizontal dimension;

an integrated circuit on said front side;

a passivation layer covering a portion of said integrated circuit exerting a stress on said substrate front side;

a stress-balancing layer covering at least a portion of said back side, said stress-balancing layer for balancing a portion of said front side stress with a generally equivalent back side stress.

82. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 81, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises one of a single component layer, a substantially homogeneous mixture of a strong material in a matrix material, a heterogeneous composite of particles of a strong material in a matrix material, and a tape with rigidity in the X-Y plane.

83. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 81, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises an adhesive material.

84. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 83, wherein said stress-balancing layer comprises a layer of material for laser-marking.

85. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 81, further comprising an adhesive layer attached to said stress-balancing layer.

86. (Withdrawn) A nonwarp semiconductor die in accordance with claim 85, wherein said adhesive layer for laser-marking.